

NURSING ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE *

By CHARLOTTE M. PERRY

Superintendent Faxton Hospital, Utica, N. Y.; Graduate Massachusetts General Hospital

(Continued from page 616)

In passing to the senior grade, one should be conscious of having gained the mastery over numerous practical details, besides having accumulated a store of theoretical knowledge. Evidence of good training will be a broader judgment, a clearer insight and foresight, decision and poise of manner, skill in the performance of professional duties, a more thorough comprehension of what is expected of her and of the methods of the school. Ignorance is unpardonable at this stage, and indicates a measure of indifference and carelessness which gives rise to grave apprehension on the part of the superintendent as to ultimate success. One who has not developed on these lines has missed the true spirit of nursing, when sacrifice becomes a joy, leading to self-mastery. No selfish, inconsiderate person, no shirk, will ever make a nurse worth naming. If she eludes notice and graduates from the school there is a judgment-bar awaiting her outside. The laity are enlightened in this day and capable of appreciating personal values. It is a mistake to take up nursing unless one is prepared to meet hardships. Through struggle and conquest we realize a joyous success and a happy career.

In many hospitals where the course is of three years' duration, the third year is given up to filling important positions. This is an advantage in two ways; it prepares the pupil nurse for institutional management, and it ensures a greater harmony in conducting the affairs of the training-school, providing that nurses who receive such appointments are loyal to their superintendent. Everything depends upon that. She is the ultimate authority, the really responsible person; so that in sharing these heavy duties, the head nurse will not feel the full weight of them. The position of head nurse is one of interest and variety. She must not only teach the nurses entrusted to her, organizing and scrutinizing their work, but must look after the welfare of the patients, keep note of their condition, reporting all changes and need of attention to the doctor. Her ward supplies are to be kept up and order maintained. She is to see that the diets prescribed by the physician are secured and properly served to the patients; that medicine and drug-lists are filled, order-sheets scheduled, and all orders executed promptly. Ventilation, heat, light, requisitions of every sort, come under her

* Lecture given to the pupil-nurses of Faxton Hospital.

province. Special needs should be reported to the superintendent, who will depend largely upon the head nurse in this respect for keeping the hospital and wards in good repair.

If we were to select two leading ideas in what we have now been considering they might be found in two qualities which every nurse should try to cultivate. Florence Nightingale, in her "Notes on Nursing," devotes an entire chapter to the power of observation in its wider sense of noting symptoms. She says, "Every nurse must be a sound, close and quick observer." It is this faculty of observation which distinguishes women of ability. One must be diligent in making the most of opportunities in the training-school. A nurse must be a many-sided person. Numerous demands are made upon her resources. Education and social experience will add to her influence, but not to so great an extent as the possession of practical instincts. We learn by what we *see* and we learn in the *doing*, not in the dreaming of what we might do under certain favorable circumstances. It is through observation that practical ideas come to us; and it is through repeated execution that we attain skill. Complaints have come from patients that nurses are often sadly lacking in those observing ways which should help to characterize them as women of intelligence, accuracy, thrift. By this is not meant the crude, harsh, commercial spirit. Our second trait, courtesy, will save us from such a distorted development as that. How many temptations there are to retaliate on the idiosyncrasies, the ignorance, and unreasonableness of patients, one knows who has had experience in a hospital with a large out-patient department,—not that these failures are peculiar to the poor, the unlearned, or unfortunate. One certainly must be well bred not to resort to impatience if not rudeness, in some situations. But we must remember in our efforts for self-control that hereunto are we called. Sad it is to note such manners in nurses who have not had any such provocation to extenuate the breach. Courtesy is called for in various relations. First, towards patients. In receiving a patient into the hospital, do not give him the impression that his presence is only tolerated because he has been sent in by the physician. Do not leave him standing in the middle of a long corridor in bewilderment, nor condemn him to wait endlessly before the object of his coming to the hospital is certified and attended to. There may have been a long journey, a long interval since the last partaking of food; to say nothing of the dread inspired by the knowledge of his disease, or prospective operation, and possibly by wrong ideas of the hospital. This is only one instance in point relative to patients; nor is it sufficient merely to admit a patient. There are many things to

think of for his comfort, and a nurse may begin at once to win his confidence by showing that she has anticipated his wants, and that he need take no thought for the preparation which must be instituted at once, quietly, and in an efficient, orderly manner. Do not ask unnecessary questions; do not betray confidences; do not indulge in talk, nor expose the patient, nor spring things suddenly upon him, nor neglect any part of your duty.

Towards the medical profession, or the confraternity of nurses, special courtesies should be extended. Our services should be given without fee to all those who risk their own lives in seeking to save life. We shall naturally wish to give of our best to those trained to know the best. And we shall find that in the blending of these two qualities, intelligent observation and courtesy, we shall prove ourselves honorable members of our profession.

SPECIAL FEEDING.

By KATHARINE DE WITT

Graduate Illinois Training School

IN those disorders of the system in which diet plays an important part, it is necessary that the nurse should understand the patient's condition and the principles on which the feeding is based, that she may work intelligently in fulfilling the doctor's orders. By her skill and ingenuity she may make the limited bill of fare less a burden to the patient and may even insure the success of an experiment which might fail in the hands of one whose patience was not sustained by a clear understanding of the results aimed at.

I. *Affections of the heart.*—No two organs are more closely related than the heart and the stomach, and the disturbance of one often affects the state of the other. Cardiac troubles are often accompanied by digestive disturbances. The liver is congested, the character of the bile may be changed, there is a tendency to gaseous distension of the stomach and bowels, the quantity of hydrochloric acid secreted by the stomach may be lessened, and assimilation and nutrition both suffer. If the stomach is distended, either by too much food or by gas, the diaphragm is pushed up and the heart displaced, causing palpitation and dyspnoea. Over-feeding is also responsible for a residue of undigested food in the intestine, giving rise to fermentation and flatulence there.

Given these facts, a reasoning person would come to the conclusion that the food must be of a nourishing, easily-digested character; that it must be properly cooled, and that no more food should be